

Counting Religion in Britain

A Monthly Round-Up of New Statistical Sources Number 50 – November 2019

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OPINION POLLS

Attitudes to Christianity, faith, and Bible: Lumino website launched by Bible Society

The Bible Society has recently launched Lumino, a resource for exploring attitudes to Christianity, faith, and the Bible, principally on the basis of an online survey by YouGov of 19,101 adults in England and Wales, including a booster sample of churchgoing Christians, in October and November 2018. Using techniques of multilevel regression and post-stratification (or MRP, currently being deployed in connection with general election polling), the sample is large enough to produce estimates for small geographies via an interactive tool. However, national data, with some breaks by demographics, are also available at:

<https://lumino.bible/insights/national/>

Asked to select, from a list, the tag that best described their religion or faith, if they had one, the frequencies were as shown in Table 1, with significant variations by gender and age.

Table 1: Self-assigned religious affiliation, England and Wales, 2018 (% down)

%	All	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
Christian	40.49	36.13	44.68	22.25	35.81	58.45
Muslim	2.61	2.74	2.48	5.01	3.03	0.43
Jew	1.03	0.95	1.12	1.09	0.61	1.38
Hindu	1.16	1.29	1.04	2.04	1.23	0.43
Buddhist	1.25	1.40	1.11	1.50	1.43	0.91
Sikh	0.47	0.58	0.37	0.64	0.64	0.19
Other religion/faith	3.53	3.14	3.90	3.01	3.97	3.51
Not religious/no religion	49.45	53.78	45.31	64.47	53.28	34.69

Among professing Christians, 55.8% differentiated themselves as Anglicans and 17.1% as Catholics, with 9.4% not associating with any particular denomination. The next largest group comprised Methodists at 5.6%. The Christian sub-sample was not especially practising, as measured by attendance at church services during the last year, other than for rites of passage: 64.0% reported they had never worshipped and a further 13.6% hardly ever, while 6.7% had been weekly.

A plurality of the whole sample (49.3%) and a majority of men (56.7%) did not believe in a God/gods or some 'higher power' and, even among women, believers (44.3%) did not constitute a majority (Table 2).

Table 2: Claimed belief in God or a higher power, England and Wales, 2018 (% down)

%	All	Male	Female
There is definitely a God/gods or some 'higher power'	21.07	17.25	24.73
There is probably a God/gods or some 'higher power'	17.22	14.73	19.61
There is probably not a God/gods or some 'higher power'	21.25	22.92	19.66
There is definitely not a God/gods or some 'higher power'	28.06	33.75	22.61
Don't know	12.40	11.35	13.39

The most popular roles for the Church in contemporary British society were: serving the poor (54.3%), providing moral guidance (41.8%), preserving the Christian faith in challenging times (27.5%), and maintaining architectural heritage (19.0%). One person in seven thought the Church should have no social role whatsoever.

Asked whether science and religion were fundamentally in opposition with each other, 40.2% agreed that they were, 28.0% disagreed, and 25.9% were neutral.

When it came to the Bible, 70.9% had no interest in discovering more about it, with 22.7% saying they would be very or fairly interested. From a list of 24 words that might possibly be used when thinking about the Bible, those which respondents were most likely to select were: outdated (36.3%), contradictory (32.4%), and judgmental (24.8%).

Attitudes to right and wrong: Savanta ComRes poll on morality for the BBC

On behalf of the BBC's Year of Beliefs, Savanta ComRes conducted an online survey of 3,655 UK adults aged 16 and over on 16–28 May 2019, including booster samples of 1,000 young people aged 16–34 and 500 Muslims. The questionnaire was a lengthy one, covering attitudes to a wide range of moral and ethical issues, thrown up in personal relationships, the work environment, and the online world. The computer tabulations to the poll extend to 1,003 pages, together with a slide report of 85 pages. These can be accessed at:

<https://www.comresglobal.com/polls/bbc-beliefs-survey-november-2019/>

It will be readily appreciated that such an exhaustive investigation cannot be summarized here, but it is worth noting that the headline finding from the report is: 'your age is most likely to define your morality, more than your religion—or lack of it—social grade, gender, or where you live in the UK'. The answers to each question are disaggregated by a basket of socio-demographic variables, including religious ones, the most important breaks (in terms of the viability of the size of the sub-groups) being for: no religion, spiritual but not part of any religion, Christian, Muslim, any organized religion, strong morals but no religion, active Christian, and active Muslim. In addition, there were a number of questions that specifically addressed religious themes, as follows:

- Acceptability of having a relationship with somebody of a different religion—for myself: acceptable 78%, unacceptable 15%, don't know 7%
- Acceptability of having a relationship with somebody of a different religion—for others: acceptable 79%, unacceptable 13%, don't know 8%
- Acceptability of covering parts of the body because faith or culture requires it—for myself: acceptable 38%, unacceptable 49%, don't know 13%
- Acceptability of covering parts of the body because faith or culture requires it—for others: acceptable 68%, unacceptable 22%, don't know 10%

- Belief that all life is created by God (1–10 scale, completely disagree–completely agree): agree 39%, disagree 26%, neutral 34%, mean score 5.97
- Agreement that the law should be written based on religious teachings (1–10 scale, completely disagree–completely agree): agree 21%, disagree 42%, neutral 37%, mean score 4.51
- Belief in divine judgment after death (1–10 scale, completely disagree–completely agree): agree 35%, disagree 22%, neutral 42%, mean score 5.92
- Religion of upbringing: Christian 68%, other religion 8%, spiritual but not part of an organized religion 2%, no religion 16%, prefer not to say 5%
- Current religion: Christian 59%, other religion 8%, spiritual but not part of an organized religion 4%, no religion 22%, prefer not to say 7%
- Average attendance at religious services (excluding special occasions such as marriages, funerals, etc.): weekly or more 18%, fortnightly or monthly 6%, every two or three months 4%, once or twice a year 23%, never 45%, don't know 5%
- Importance of faith in day-to-day life: important 48%, neither important nor unimportant 22%, unimportant 27%, don't know 3%
- Importance of spirituality in day-to-day life: important 47%, neither important nor unimportant 25%, unimportant 25%, don't know 3%

ADL Global 100: An Index of Anti-Semitism, 2019 update

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has updated the ADL Global 100 index of anti-Semitism by undertaking a further round of telephone fieldwork in 18 countries, including Great Britain (where 500 adults aged 18 and over, with an oversample of Muslims, were interviewed), between April and June 2019. The proportion of British respondents holding that each of 11 individual anti-Semitic tropes was probably true is shown in Table 3, with breaks by gender and age (by religion is also available). The number of Britons believing that six or more of these tropes were true (ADL's tipping-point for defining anti-Semitism) was 11%, similar to the 12% recorded in Britain in 2015. Men (14%) were found to be more anti-Semitic on this index than women (9%). In terms of age, the under-35s (17%) were more anti-Semitic than the over-35s (9%). By religion, nones were least anti-Semitic (8%) and Muslims the most (54%). The 2019 British results are online at:

<https://global100.adl.org/country/united-kingdom/2019>

Table 3: Belief that 11 anti-Semitic tropes are probably true, Great Britain, 2019 (%)

	All	Male	Female	18–34	35–49	50+
Jews are more loyal to Israel than to this country	33	35	31	38	22	36
Jews have too much power in the business world	20	23	16	25	15	19
Jews have too much power in international financial markets	20	26	14	27	15	18
Jews still talk too much about what happened to them in the Holocaust	18	23	12	21	17	16
Jews don't care what happens to anyone but their own kind	14	16	12	16	11	15
Jews have too much control over global affairs	13	16	10	19	10	10
Jews have too much control over the United States government	18	21	14	19	17	18
Jews think they are better than other people	16	19	13	23	13	13
Jews have too much control over the global media	13	17	10	21	11	10
Jews are responsible for most of the world's wars	5	5	4	8	6	2
People hate Jews because of the way Jews behave	16	22	10	21	10	16

Antisemitism Barometer, 2019 from the Campaign against Antisemitism

The Campaign against Antisemitism has just published *Antisemitism Barometer, 2019*, the third in the series, albeit the underlying opinion research is now in its fifth year. The report, prepared in collaboration with King’s College London, summarizes the findings of online fieldwork which was carried out in 2018 and 2019, comprising two YouGov cross-sections of the adult population of Great Britain, and two surveys of self-selecting samples of self-identifying British Jews. The YouGov polls were conducted on 6–7 September 2018 and 24–25 September 2019 among, respectively, 1,606 and 2,040 adults, the latter sample including boosts of people holding very right-wing and very left-wing views. The convenience samples of Jews responded between 16 August and 17 September 2018 and between 3 and 30 October 2019, there being, respectively, 2,103 and 2,695 valid replies. The report is available at:

<https://antisemitism.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Antisemitism-Barometer-2019.pdf>

What is now described as Judeophobic anti-Semitism was measured by replicating seven tropes included in the earlier YouGov polls, for example, ‘British Jewish people chase money more than other British people’ and ‘Having a connection to Israel makes Jewish people less loyal to Britain than other Jewish people’. The extent to which these tropes were endorsed is shown in Table 4, the picture being fairly stable over time, apart from in 2015, the difference in that year being accountable by variant question wording. For details, see pp. 7–15 of the report.

Table 4: Number of Judeophobic anti-Semitic tropes endorsed, Great Britain, 2015–19 (%)

At least	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2015	55	45	26	17	11	7	4	3
2016	61	39	21	13	8	5	2	1
2017	64	36	19	12	7	4	2	1
2018	64	36	20	13	8	4	2	0
2019	63	37	19	12	8	6	2	1

In 2019, however, the statements were extended to incorporate the range of anti-Zionist examples included in the International Definition of Antisemitism (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Antisemitism). The six measures relating to Israel that were added included such statements as ‘Israel and its supporters are a bad influence on our democracy’ and ‘Israel can get away with anything because its supporters control the media’. The proportion of Britons found to hold at least one Judeophobic anti-Semitic view or at least one anti-Zionist anti-Semitic view was a majority, or 56%. Moreover, 54% of those who held one or more anti-Zionist anti-Semitic views also held one or more Judeophobic anti-Semitic views; and 63% of those who held one or more Judeophobic anti-Semitic views also held one or more anti-Zionist anti-Semitic views. See pp. 16–21 for details.

Important political correlates of anti-Semitism were uncovered. Manifestations of anti-Semitism were visible across the entire left-right scale, but the very left wing exhibited by far the most agreement with anti-Semitic statements, 75% espousing at least one and 58% two or more. Furthermore, the more intensely respondents supported the leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, the more likely they were to hold multiple anti-Semitic views. See pp. 22–4 for details. Full data tables from the 2019 YouGov polling have been published online at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/6lybmr9kty/KCL_Antisemitism_190925%20%28002%29.pdf

With regard to the survey of Jews, caution needs to be expressed about assuming it to be representative, given the sampling methodology adopted. See pp. 27–39 for details. Some of the 2019 findings are certainly headline-grabbing, for instance:

- 42% of British Jews claim to have considered leaving Britain during the past two years due to anti-Semitism (against 28% in 2016)
- 53% feel very or somewhat unwelcome in the UK
- There are perceived very serious threats to British Jews from Islamists (74%), the far left (65%), and the far right (60%)
- 78% have witnessed anti-Semitism disguised as a political comment on Israel or Zionism
- 81% agree that media bias against Israel fuels persecution of Jews in Britain
- 63% disagree that the authorities are doing enough to address and punish anti-Semitism
- 80% agree that recent political events have resulted in increased hostility towards Jews
- 86% consider the Labour Party to be too tolerant of anti-Semitism within the party
- 84% label Jeremy Corbyn a threat to British Jews

Muslim women and removal of the face veil

More than three-fifths (63%) of 1,670 British adults interviewed online by YouGov for the *Sunday Times* on 14–15 November 2019 thought it acceptable for people like MPs, doctors, and teachers to ask Muslim women wearing a face veil to remove it when talking to them. The number reached 84% among Conservative voters and 86% among the over-65s. Just 23% (disproportionately Labour voters and under-25s) considered it unacceptable to ask a Muslim woman to remove her veil, while 14% were undecided. Full data tables are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/4eowzxp8kz/TheSundayTimes_VI_Results_191115_noGEXMAS_w.pdf

Trust in clergy and other professions: Ipsos MORI Veracity Index, 2019

Distrust in clergy and priests to tell the truth has risen over time, according to the Ipsos MORI Veracity Index, recently updated with findings from the 2019 survey. The number of Britons distrusting clergy and priests is now three times higher than in the first (1983) poll, 32% against 11%. Trust in them to tell the truth has dropped by 21 points over the same period, from 85% to 64%, albeit this was 2% more than in 2018. In 2019, trust in clergy and priests was higher among Conservative (69%) than Labour (63%) supporters, and among degree holders (68%) than those with no formal educational qualifications (57%). Relative to the other 24 professions covered by the survey, clergy and priests are ranked thirteenth in terms of their perceived veracity. Fieldwork for the latest round of face-to-face interviewing was conducted with 1,020 British adults aged 15 and over on 18–27 October 2019. A slide pack with the key findings is available at:

<https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2019-11/trust-in-professions-veracity-index-2019-slides.pdf>

OPINION POLLS–2019 GENERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

December 2019 general election: religion and voting intention

Buried at the back of the tables for an online survey by ComRes, on behalf of Britain Elects, on 8–10 November 2019 is table 106 on p. 110 which sheds light on the current voting intentions, if declared, by faith groupings of the 2,014 British adults who were interviewed. A summary appears below (Table 5), and the detailed tables can be found at:

<https://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-Britain-Elects-Tables-081119.pdf>

Table 5: Declared voting intentions by faith groupings, Great Britain, November 2019 (% down)

	Total	Christians	Non-Christians	Religious nones
Conservative	34	44	23	24
Labour	27	19	43	33
Liberal Democrat	15	15	12	16
Brexit Party	8	10	6	7
Other parties	8	5	12	10
Unlikely to vote	8	7	5	9

December 2019 general election: anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

The impending general election, on 12 December 2019, has again brought to the fore issues of perceived anti-Semitism in the Labour Party and, to a lesser extent, perceived Islamophobia in the Conservative Party. These have been covered in several opinion polls conducted during the campaign thus far.

Savanta ComRes for Daily Telegraph, 11–12 November 2019, online, n = 2,022

Anti-Semitism: A majority (55%) agreed that ‘Jeremy Corbyn’s failure to tackle anti-Semitism within his own party shows he is unfit to be Prime Minister’, while 21% disagreed and 24% were equivocal. Two-thirds also supported barring candidates from standing in the general election if they were found to have made anti-Semitic statements in public or on social media.

Islamophobia: A similar number (61%) endorsed the exclusion of candidates who had made Islamophobic statements. Full data tables are available at:

https://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ComRes_Telegraph_GE2019-VI-I-Tables_13c11d19h.pdf

Savanta ComRes for Sunday Telegraph, 13–14 November 2019, online, n = 2,052

Anti-Semitism: A plurality (47%) agreed that ‘allegations of antisemitism within the Labour Party make me think twice about voting Labour’, with 24% dissenting and 30% neutral or undecided. A plurality (46%) also disagreed that ‘the Labour Party is doing enough to tackle antisemitism within its own ranks’, just 21% being in agreement (albeit 54% of intending Labour voters). Full data tables are available at:

<https://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-Sunday-Telegraph-VI-II-Tables-15c11d19h.pdf>

Deltapoll, 21–23 November 2019, online, n = 1,519

Anti-Semitism: A majority (59%) thought the Labour Party to be anti-Semitic and 44% deemed Corbyn as anti-Semitic. Three in ten judged anti-Semitism to be more common in the Labour Party than in other political parties.

Islamophobia: Almost half (45%) of respondents rated the Conservative Party as Islamophobic and 28% the party leader, Boris Johnson, as Islamophobic. However, only 18% thought Islamophobia was more common in the Conservative Party than in other political parties. Topline results are included in the data tables for the Deltapoll of 28–30 November 2019 (see below).

YouGov for The Times, 25–26 November 2019, online, n = 1,678

Anti-Semitism: Three in ten respondents assessed Corbyn as being personally anti-Semitic, with 32% saying he was not, and 39% uncertain. Full data tables are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/bku61eg2o4/TheTimes_Results_191126_v2.pdf

YouGov, 26 November 2019, online, n = 1,329

Anti-Semitism: The poll was conducted in the immediate aftermath of a forthright article by Ephraim Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the UK, in *The Times* on 26 November, in which he dismissed as ‘a mendacious fiction’ the Labour leadership’s claim to be doing everything possible to tackle anti-Semitism in the party, and raised questions about Jeremy Corbyn’s fitness for high office. The YouGov question mentioned only his criticism of Labour’s record in dealing with anti-Semitism and his request that people ‘vote with their conscience’ at the general election. A plurality (44%) judged that Mirvis had been right to comment on the election in this way, but 27% considered him in the wrong, with 29% undecided. Full data tables are available at:

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/survey-results/daily/2019/11/26/882a1/1>

Savanta ComRes for Sunday Telegraph, 27–28 November 2019, online, n = 2,025

Anti-Semitism: Asked whether they agreed with the Chief Rabbi’s contention that Corbyn’s handling of allegations of anti-Semitism in the Labour Party rendered him unfit for high office, 44% of respondents said they agreed, 14% were neutral, 26% disagreed, and 16% did not know. One-third (32%) deemed it inappropriate for the Chief Rabbi to have spoken out against Corbyn and the Labour Party during an election campaign, while 16% were neutral, 39% disagreed, and 14% did not know. One-third (34%) agreed that anti-Semitism will increase in the UK if Corbyn wins the general election, 17% being neutral, 29% dissenting, and 20% undecided. A majority (51%) thought the Labour Party had a particular problem with anti-Semitism and only 18% disagreed, the remainder being neutral or undecided. Two-fifths agreed that anti-Semitism is a serious problem in Britain, with 23% disagreeing.

Islamophobia: Asked whether Islamophobia would increase in the UK if Boris Johnson, the Conservative leader, won the general election, 29% agreed, with 18% neutral, 34% dissenting, and 20% undecided. One-third (32%) agreed that the Conservative Party had a particular problem with Islamophobia, while 30% disagreed and the remainder were neutral or undecided. Three-fifths judged as unacceptable the description (actually by Johnson) in 2018 of women in burkas as looking like ‘letter boxes’ and ‘bank robbers’, with 18% defending it. Almost half (49%) agreed that Islamophobia is a serious problem in Britain, 22% disagreeing. Full data tables are available at:

https://www.comresglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Savanta-ComRes_Sunday-Telegraph_Voting-Intention_29Nov2019.pdf

Panelbase, 27–28 November 2019, online, n = 2,010

Anti-Semitism: One-quarter (24%) of the sample thought that anti-Semitism was a problem within the Conservative Party, but 41% did not and 34% were neutral. The majority (53%) said that anti-Semitism was a problem within the Labour Party, just 19% disagreeing and 28% neutral.

Islamophobia: Two-fifths (39%) considered Islamophobia to be a problem within the Conservative Party, while 30% did not and 31% were neutral. Three in ten persons perceived Islamophobia as a problem within the Labour Party, against 36% who did not and 34% who were neutral. Full data tables are available at:

<https://www.drg.global/wp-content/uploads/Panelbase-GB-poll-tables-for-publication-281119.pdf>

YouGov for Sunday Times, 28–29 November 2019, online, n = 1,680

Anti-Semitism: One-third (35%) deemed the Labour Party to be institutionally anti-Semitic, while 31% did not, and 34% were unsure.

Islamophobia: One-quarter (24%) judged the Conservative Party to be institutionally Islamophobic, but 40% did not, and 37% were unsure. Full data tables are available at:

https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/3e6ngxeco2/TheSundayTimes_VI_Results_191129_w.pdf

Deltapoll for Mail on Sunday, 28–30 November 2019, online, n = 1,528

Anti-Semitism: Two-thirds (65%) thought the Labour Party to be anti-Semitic and 42% deemed Corbyn as anti-Semitic. One-third (35%) judged anti-Semitism to be more common in the Labour Party than in other political parties.

Islamophobia: Two-fifths (39%) rated the Conservative Party as Islamophobic and 23% the party leader, Boris Johnson, as Islamophobic. However, only 18% thought Islamophobia was more common in the Conservative Party than in other political parties. Full data tables are available at:

<http://www.deltapoll.co.uk/polls/general-election-2019-part-5>

FAITH ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Does the 2030 Future Have a Church? New e-book from Peter Brierley

Peter Brierley, the ever tireless church consultant, has published his latest book in e-format: *Does the 2030 Future Have a Church? The Current Christian Scene—Major Global and UK Trends, 2020 to 2030* (Tonbridge: ADBC Publishers, 2019, 123pp., including 46 tables and 44 figures, plus bibliography and index, ISBN: 978-0-9957646-3-7, £20). In it, he distils a wealth of research conducted and published since the millennium (in the main), much of it by himself, and updates it where necessary, not least to add his forecasts for what might happen to Trinitarian denominations (non-Trinitarian ones are largely out of scope) during the 2020s. There are five chapters, two on global issues, one on Europe, and two on the UK (although, in practice, the UK features to a certain extent in the other three chapters, as well). The focus of the UK content is disproportionately on the outcomes and implications of the various church attendance censuses for which Brierley has been responsible, with loud warning bells sounded about the growing imbalances in the gender and age profiles of churchgoers. However, it should be remembered that Brierley has only conducted one such census in Wales himself (hence, sensibly, he concentrates on England and Scotland, albeit there are some other data on the Principality) and that the last England-wide census was in 2005 (except for Greater London in 2012); therefore, some of the fixed data points used for projection are not very recent. Notwithstanding much doom and gloom along the way, Brierley's answer to the question posed in his title still seems cautiously affirmative. The book will be of particular interest to church leaders and practical theologians, not least if they are relatively unfamiliar with Brierley's extensive writing. Meanwhile, the statistical addicts among us will be eagerly awaiting the fourth edition of Brierley's *UK Church Statistics*, promised for 2020. To order and download a copy of the e-book, go to:

<https://www.brierleyconsultancy.com/shop/does-the-church-have-a-future>

Church of England cathedral statistics, 2018

Almost ten million people visited English Anglican cathedrals in 2018, with one-third of them paying or donating for entry, in addition to a further 1,200,000 who visited Westminster Abbey, almost all of whom paid for admission. Usual weekly cathedral services were attended by far fewer, 36,700, evenly divided between Sunday and midweek worship; this figure has been basically flat since 2013, following a 17% increase from 2008 to 2013. Congregations at Easter Day services amounted to 58,000, 18% higher than in 2008, with an additional 95,000 during Holy Week. Christmas attendance was 133,000, second only to 2017 (135,000) since records began in 2000, with 617,000 at Advent services. The 48-page report on *Cathedral Statistics, 2018* is available via the link at:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/record-numbers-visitors-and-worshippers-flock-englands-cathedrals>

Statistics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

The first Mormon missionaries came to the British Isles in 1837, but the progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ebbed and flowed for a very long time afterwards, largely arising from the emigration of converts to the USA. A major breakthrough was not achieved until the early 1960s, when a surge of missionary endeavour resulted in 40,600 baptisms and

the multiplication of church units from 100 to 276. The Latter-day Saints had 72,900 members in the UK by 1970, rising to 175,600 in 2000, before levelling off after the millennium. A peak of 188,500 members was reached in 2012, yet declines were registered in 2001, 2003, 2013–14, and 2016, as retention became a problem. The following figures (Table 6) have been reproduced from Cumorah.com (International Resources for Latter-day Saints). They relate to the UK rather than Great Britain, although membership in Northern Ireland is no more than around 5,000.

Table 6: Statistics of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, UK, 2010–18

	Church units	Members
2010	333	186,814
2011	332	188,029
2012	333	188,462
2013	334	186,768
2014	335	186,193
2015	332	186,423
2016	333	185,848
2017	327	186,852
2018	323	187,415

British Muslims and the December 2019 general election

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has released details of 31 marginal parliamentary seats (14 currently held by Labour, 14 by the Conservatives, and three by the Scottish National Party) where Muslim voters could be expected to have a ‘high’ or ‘medium’ impact on the results of the forthcoming general election. In the potentially high impact seats, Muslims constitute up to 14% of voting age constituents. The research is part of the MCB’s wider non-partisan drive to encourage Muslim communities to register to vote. A press release, incorporating a link to the full analysis, is available at:

<https://mcb.org.uk/general/mcb-finds-muslim-voters-could-swing-31-marginal-seats/>

OFFICIAL AND QUASI-OFFICIAL STATISTICS

Crimes at churches and religious buildings, 2017–19: police data under FOI requests

By means of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act, the Countryside Alliance has obtained, from 40 of the 45 police forces in the UK, statistics of crimes at churches and religious buildings from January 2017 to as close to the present in 2019 as possible. The five non-responding forces included the City of London Police and Police Scotland. The 40 other forces recorded a total of 20,168 crimes, comprising 1,053 lead thefts, 8,081 general thefts, 4,578 instances of criminal damage, 2,605 acts of violence, and 3,851 other crimes. A report on the survey, by each police force, incorporating a link to the detailed figures, is available at:

<https://www.countryside-alliance.org/news/2019/11/ca-special-report-into-crimes-against-churches>

Diversity reporting by Government departments and agencies

Two more Government departments and agencies recently published profiles of their staff by protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act, including religion or belief. They are:

Ministry of Defence civilian personnel:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/mod-diversity-dashboard-2019>

Prison and Probation Service staff:

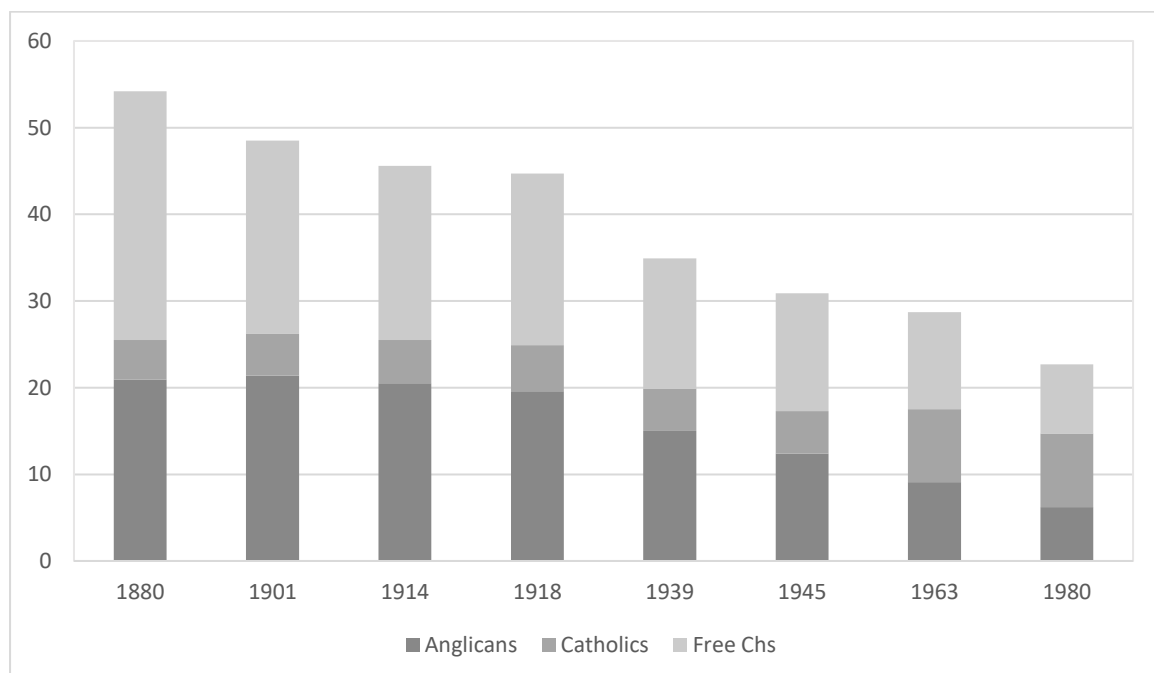
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hm-prison-and-probation-service-staff-equalities-report-2018-to-2019>

ACADEMIC STUDY

Periodizing secularization in modern British history

In *Periodizing Secularization: Religious Allegiance and Attendance in Britain, 1880–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, xvii + 310pp., ISBN: 978-0-19-884880-6, £70, hardback), Clive Field moves beyond the (now somewhat tired) debates about secularization as paradigm, theory, or master narrative to focus upon the empirical evidence for secularization, viewed in its descriptive sense as the waning social influence of religion, in Britain.

Figure 1: Conjectural active church adherence as percentage of the adult population, Great Britain, c.1880–c.1980



Particular emphasis is attached to the two key performance indicators of religious allegiance and churchgoing, each subsuming several sub-indicators, between 1880 and 1945, including the first substantive account of secularization during the *fin de siècle*. A wide range of quantitative and qualitative primary sources is deployed, many relatively or entirely unknown, and with due regard to their methodological and interpretative challenges. On the back of them, a cross-cutting statistical measure of ‘active church adherence’ is devised (see Figure 1, above), which clearly shows how secularization has been a reality and a gradual, not revolutionary, process.

The most likely causes of secularization were, it is argued, an incremental demise of a Sabbatarian culture and of religious socialization (in the church, at home, and in the school). The analysis is also extended backwards, to include a summary of developments during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and laterally, to incorporate a preliminary evaluation of a six-dimensional model of ‘diffusive religion’, demonstrating that these alternative performance indicators have hitherto failed to prove that secularization has not occurred.

The book is designed as a prequel to the author’s previous volumes on the chronology of British secularization: *Britain’s Last Religious Revival? Quantifying Belonging, Behaving, and Believing in the Long 1950s* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015) and *Secularization in the Long 1960s: Numerating Religion in Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2017). Together, they offer a holistic picture of religious transformation in Britain during the key secularizing century of 1880–1980. A fourth volume in the series is already in preparation: *Counting Religion in Britain, 1970–2020: Secularization in Statistical Context*. The webpage for *Periodizing Secularization* is at:

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/periodizing-secularization-9780198848806?cc=gb&lang=en&>

Chapter abstracts can be viewed at:

<https://clivedfield.wordpress.com/publications-british-religious-history-2/periodizing-secularization/>